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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5276
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INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0601
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2094
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 6165
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2125
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 9696
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1447
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 0871
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 2219
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1260
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHMFISS/USFJ
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 001705

SIPDIS

DOD FOR OSD/APSA SHINN/SEDNEY/WILKES/HILL/BASALLA
NSC FOR WILDER/KATZ
USFJ FOR J00/J01/J3/J5
PACOM FOR J00/J01/J5

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [AF](#) [IZ](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: CABINET TO REVIEW AFGHAN OPTIONS BEFORE G-8
MEETINGS

REF: A. TOKYO 1464 (NOTAL)
[1](#)B. TOKYO 1657 (NOTAL)
[1](#)C. TOKYO 1593 (NOTAL)
[1](#)D. SECDEF DTG 031932Z JUN 08 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer; Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: Key ministers will seek a consensus on a possible new mission to Afghanistan before the June 26-27 G-8 Foreign Ministerial meeting in Kyoto, according to MOFA National Security Division Director Takeo Mori. Mori said that the survey team dispatched to Afghanistan and neighboring countries encountered no negative "surprises" that would change Japan's calculations over the contents of a new Self-Defense Force (SDF) mission. Mori noted that Cabinet discussions will initially focus on CH-47 helicopter lift, adding that deep differences remain between the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and MOFA leadership over the issue. If Tokyo decides against sending the CH-47s, Mori suggested that the U.S. propose specific options for a PRT dispatch. Mori noted that resolve to press ahead on a new mission amongst Cabinet ministers has "gone a bit shaky" in recent weeks due to negative feedback from senior coalition Diet members. Nevertheless, Mori assessed that upcoming G-8 Ministerial and Summit discussions on the subject should help restore confidence in the leadership's plan to initiate a new ground operation in Afghanistan. End Summary.

No Surprises

[1](#)2. (S/NF) MOFA National Security Division Director Mori (protect) told the Embassy on June 20 that the inter-agency Afghan survey team had a productive set of meetings in Afghanistan and neighboring countries. Mori said that the team encountered no new negative "surprises" that would lead the government to change its basic assumptions on the viability of an Afghan dispatch (Ref A). Director General-level officials from MOFA and MOD will brief Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura on the survey mission

late on June 20. Machimura, Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba, and Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura will meet early in the week of June 23 to decide on next steps.

CH-47s Alive, but Still a Challenge

¶3. (S/NF) Mori said that Cabinet-level discussions will focus initially on a possible CH-47 dispatch. MOD leadership remains positive on this option (Ref B), despite resistance from MOFA and the Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF), he added. The GSDF has identified four technical challenges to sending heavy-lift helicopters: 1) requirement to install defensive counter-measures; 2) need for new engines for high-altitude operations; 3) likely redesign of the fuselage to accommodate a different type of engine 4) lack of compatible communications systems to receive tactical intelligence from ISAF forces. Regarding the final item, Mori said that he suspects the GSDF is also concerned about the foreign language issues involved in operating in a coalition environment.

¶4. (S/NF) MOFA's objections to the CH-47 dispatch focus on legal and political dynamics, Mori asserted. Unlike fixed-wing operations, it is harder to make the case that CH-47 operations can be limited to "non-combat zones." The government's complex legal brief to defend its C-130 operations in Iraq is based on assurances that the air/ground space for flight operations is fixed and has been vetted for safety. By the nature of helicopter operations, it will be

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difficult to offer assurances in advance about conditions where the CH-47s would be deployed. Both the Cabinet Legislative Bureau and, more importantly, the junior coalition partner Komeito would very likely reject any attempt to expand the constitutional interpretation to allow CH-47 operations in the current environment, Mori concluded.

PRTs: Perfect the Enemy of the Good?

¶5. (S/NF) Mori expressed concern that ASD for Asia and Pacific Security Affairs Shinn's request for Japan to provide a PRT with full force protection (Ref B) might scare the Fukuda Cabinet away from considering such an option. Mori acknowledged that the GSDF could potentially do some force protection, such as perimeter security. If Japan were asked to sustain a PRT without any third country force protection assistance, however, this may take the option off the table (Note: Per Ref C, the Cabinet Office maintains that the SDF would be unable to respond to threats outside of the fence line. End Note.) Mori stated that, if the U.S. is seriously interested in a PRT deployment and has a particular operation in mind, it should say so if/when Tokyo informs the U.S. government that it will not be able to send CH-47s.

¶6. (S/NF) As for other potential operations, the Japanese government understands ISAF's need for Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) support. While Japan has the technical capability, Mori stated, the missions briefed to the survey team in Kabul would violate Japan's current legal limits on providing ISR support to offensive operations. Mori did not rule out the dispatch of P-3Cs to the Indian Ocean to conduct maritime ISR activities in support of OEF MIO, but said that this would likely be considered as a small part of a larger package focused on ground operations.

¶7. (S/NF) Mori downplayed prospects for broad legislative authority that would allow Japan to expand its operations if the political situation changed for the better after the next General Election. MOFA legal experts believe that if a new Special Measures Law provided specific details for the envisioned operations, a single Diet vote, subject to a Lower House override, would suffice to begin a new mission. If

this interpretation can be upheld, Mori added, the opposition would have no means of blocking the dispatch in the Upper House.

Political/International Dynamics

18. (S/NF) Mori acknowledged that confidence among the three National Security Cabinet members to pursue a new Afghan operation has been somewhat shaken due to negative feedback they have received in recent weeks from leading coalition Diet members. Nevertheless, Mori said that upcoming G-8 meetings should help stiffen their resolve. Mori said he was personally pleased that Defense Minister Ishiba went beyond his script in his recent meeting with Secretary Gates in Singapore (Ref D), since it has greatly raised the diplomatic cost to the Fukuda Cabinet for reversing course in the face of pressure from skittish Diet leaders. Mori said that high-level U.S. diplomatic pressure will be extremely helpful in this regard, but cautioned that discussions be kept out of the public to allow Tokyo to publicly portray any new mission as a positive contribution to international society rather than a response to U.S. demands.

19. (S/NF) Mori predicted that Foreign Minister Koumura would deliver a negative response on the CH-47s to Secretary Rice

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on the margins of the Kyoto G-8 ministerial, setting the stage for Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to deliver a positive offer on some other combination of operations at the bilateral with the President in Hokkaido. If all goes according to his calculations, Mori said, the new mission would be announced to the public several weeks after the Summit.
SCHIEFFER